

# The Lyden Residence

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*Classic lodges from the Adirondacks to the Rockies inspired the uncommon warmth and rugged beauty of this outdoor family's mountain home. And there's a bit of Irish stonework to please the resident leprechaun.*



The O'Leathans wanted their new home to look as though it had been nestled years ago into this towering forest of spruce, aspen, and lodgepole pine. It does, thanks to careful site planning and follow-up landscaping that added even more trees. The same truss, tone, and cedar-shake detailing links the garage to the main house.

Extensive and thoughtful use of natural materials gives the O'Leathan home vintage lodge appeal, melds its rustic styles, and anchors it visually to the wooded mountain site.





Lakeside living spaces are oriented to spectacular views of Goose Pasture Tarn. To mute the contemporary edge of big panes, the architects selected windows with arch tops and paired them with nostalgic double-hung windows. The dining and great-rooms open onto the deck for barbecues and outdoor entertaining.

“Initially, the O’Leathans had intended to buy, not build. They began checking out real estate, but the houses they really liked had two things in common: They were all designed by architect Jon Gunson’s Breckenridge firm, and they weren’t for sale.”

“The forested lot they chose for their 5,400-square-foot, two-level home is a squarish 2 acres that fronts Goose Pasture Tarn—a mountain lake on two sides. “I don’t know of another like it in Colorado’s mountains,” Gunson says. “It provided a wonderful opportunity to give every room a view of the lake.”

Gunson analyzed the view angles and the seasonal solar profile to determine the floor plan and how the house would best sit on the lot. Now, morning light bathes the east-facing breakfast nook, and the afternoon’s western sun warms the great-room.”



With gnarled-pine logs, stone pillars, and antique lanterns, this mountain retreat’s grand entry is reminiscent of rustic Adirondack lodges built a century ago. The Colorado buff sandstone walkway sweeps right into the foyer, beyond the hefty custom-designed front door.

“Although Gunson says his firm builds a range of homes, from Victorian to contemporary to Western ranch, and has no signature style, they do leave each client with a one-of-a-kind memento—a signature front door. He designed the handcrafted pine door to make a striking first impression—it’s 8 feet high, 4 feet wide, and 2 1/2 inches thick. “That’s kind of a fun thing to do to personalize each one. What we like to do is a start-to-finish project. That way it all goes together as one concept. ...It all fits,” he says.”



Every detail in the lodge-look kitchen—hammered-copper counter, brick floor, crackle-finish backsplash, and a barn-style refrigerator door—turns back the clock. Painted drawers and doors with punched-tin insets were sanded around the edges. Collectibles and faux food, such as a tin of Irish eels, are painted above the cabinets.



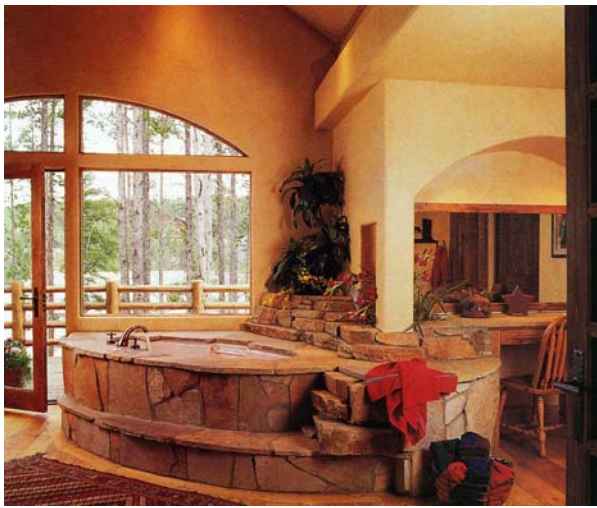
“We wanted the house to have an Adirondack, Western feeling—not South western,” Kris explains. “Seamus is from Ireland, so we also wanted it to have an old European cobblestone feeling.”

**F**rom the start, Kris says they felt they were “always on the same wavelength” with Gunson and his firm’s associate, Keith Birchler. Gunson has an affinity for the style because he has long admired turn-of-the-century Adirondack lodges and their Western counterparts at Yellowstone and Mount Rainier national parks. “They show a lot of detail and craftsmanship. They pay attention to detail, even though it’s rustic,” Gunson says.



Capped by a copper-banded pyramid above the table, the dining room is an easy-flow site between the great-room and the kitchen, ideal for this family that loves to entertain. The generous table—which seats 15—is made from an antique door from Santa Fe.

Although structurally necessary, the home’s massive scissor trusses, made of 18-inch-diameter Western pine logs, star in setting the lodge mood.



The image of an old homestead where only the stone chimney remained standing inspired this master bath shower, built of Colorado buff sandstone with walls of freestanding glass.

Kris found a magazine photo of a stone tub surround and zipped it off to the architect. Edging the tub in sandstone softens its contemporary angles. Windows in the spa space open to a lake-view deck.

The versatile floor plan makes room for everybody when all of the O’Leathan clan visits at the same time, but it’s still cozy for Seamus and Kris when they’re alone. On the second level, the stairway turns onto an open pine-rail bridge—a “great” great-room lookout—that leads to the private master suite on one side. On the other side of the bridge are two of the four guest bedrooms. Although main-floor living spaces flow together, varying design elements and materials define each room’s character.



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Seamus, who manages his own investment firm, says he’s talked with people who have done custom-built homes, and after they move in, they often have regrets—they find deficiencies, things they’d change, and things they wish they’d added. But there’s no second-guessing in the lodge on the O’Leathans’ mountaintop. “It’s fantastic!” Seamus concludes. “We wouldn’t change anything if we had to do the whole thing over again.”

